

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

Units stress vigilance against threats in Iraq

**CAMP VICTORY, Kuwait** — With an increase in improvised explosive devices being used by insurgents in Iraq against American convoys, the 1st Force Service Support Group is squeezing in some last-minute training to spin up personnel before they roll out.

Units in the 1st FSSG, whose main mission will be to deliver supplies to the I Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq, are sending some of their Marines and sailors through a day-long course at a training area in Kuwait to prepare them for the dangers of convoying through Iraq.

The biggest threat to American troops is homemade bombs, according to explosive ordinance disposal technicians of the Group's 7th Engineer Support Battalion.

The bombs, which turn up daily, are creatively made and hidden. Some are placed in piles of garbage on the side of the road and even in animal carcasses. In some instances, vehicles laden with explosives have attempted to swerve into military convoys.

With the threat so random, training isn't so much about tactics as it is reminding Marines to stay on their toes.

Identifying and reacting to the improvised explosives requires quick thinking and split-second decisions, said 1st Lt. Scott T. Sturrock, a platoon commander with 2nd Military Police Battalion, based in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The Marine Corps doesn't have a standard doctrine regulating reactions to convoy attacks. Each unit develops its own procedures based on their mission. For 1st FSSG, it's getting the supplies through.

Command recognized for family readiness

**ARLINGTON, Va.**— The 6th Engineer Support Battalion received the 2003 Reserve Family Readiness Award in a ceremony at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes Feb. 13.

The Reserve Family Readiness award, established by the Department of Defense in 2000, recognizes reserve units that have greatly enhanced their deployability through family readiness programs while maintaining mission accomplishment.

With 12 geographic sites and 13 units located throughout the United States, this 2,300 plus reserve command is the largest battalion within the Marine Corps. For the first time in 40 years, the entire battalion was

Up, up and away ...

STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR — An UH-1N Huey helicopter from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 266 (Reinforced), aviation combat element of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), lifts off from the flight deck of the USS Wasp as the ships of Expeditionary Strike Group 2 pass through the Strait of Gibraltar. In the foreground is the USS Whidbey Island, a guided missile cruiser, and the mountains of southern Spain.

Cpl. Jemssy Alvarez

Marines, Djiboutian police observe training

**DJIBOUTI CITY, Djibouti** — Eyes and ears were wide open as a team of FBI bomb technicians taught Marines and students from the Djiboutian National Police Force about improvised explosive devices here Feb. 24.

Twelve Marines from K Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment—the force protection providers for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa—observed the training to better identify IEDs and the danger they can create.

The Marines were invited to the class because of their force protection role in searching vehicles before they pass through the gates of Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, where CJTF-HOA forces are stationed. Their job is to keep the base safe by inspecting vehicles for IEDs and other tools of terrorism.

“We see a lot of vehicles each day, and this type of training really helps us to not get complacent in our jobs,” said Lance Cpl. Eddie Ryan, an infantryman whose daily duties are comprised of searching vehicles as they reach the entry control point aboard Camp Lemonier.

Special Agent Eric Morefield, bomb technician for the FBI, provided more knowledge about vehicle-born IEDs and what can happen if they are deployed properly.

The hours of training the Marines participated in was both a refresher and an eye-opener, but for students from the police academy here it was part of a two-week course given to them. The program provided basic terrorism crime scene investigation techniques like crime scene security and proper evidence collection.

Pacific area units wrap up combined arms exercise

**MCB HAWAII, KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii** — Both active and reserve Marines and sailors from units stationed in the Pacific arena — which included Okinawa and Iwakuni, Japan, and MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay — were tasked to work together in a single scenario in support of the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise held at Pohakuloa Training Area.

Marine Aircraft Group 24 Commanding Officer Col. Gregory C. Reuss was designated as the exercise officer in charge.

“It has been a learning experience for our staff,” said Reuss. “We are normally just the air combat element. The Marine Air Ground Task Force flavor offers a broader focus on working with the ground combat element, and the various support elements in a lot of areas.”

“Also, the Tactical Exercise Control Group [TECG] has provided a great exercise scheme which integrates a myriad of scenarios that gets all units engaged.”

The mission of III Marine Expeditionary Force TECG is to provide the command element of III MEF with tactical exercise support and a

war-gaming conflict simulation capability.

“Colonel Reuss made a decision that it was time to ‘up the challenge’ for HCAX. His intent was to create an environment for subordinate commands that was as close to the real MAGTF operation as possible,” said Maj. John Coleman, assistant operations officer for TECG III MEF.

The MAG-24 staff created a scenario based on a country that had been invaded by an enemy, and sought help from the United States. Though fully challenged by the scenario, MAGTF-3 successfully neutralized the hostile forces within their area of operations.

Logistical operation for OIF II underway

**KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait** — The American armed forces here are undertaking a massive reception, staging, onward movement and integration logistical operation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

“The movement of 300,000 military personnel will be unbelievable considering we are only using one main naval port and one major airport,” said Marine Lt. Col. William C. Boden, assistant chief of staff for logistics, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command.

Boden further pointed out the difference that during OIF I everything was coming in and nothing was going out.

“When all the vehicles are coming in, you have to find a place to put them,” he said. “Now they are trading spots.”

Coordinating the replacement of personnel and equipment has taken place relatively smoothly.

Recently at one end of the shipping port, dozens of shrink-wrapped helicopters and thousands of clean vehicles, all belonging to the Army, wait to embark aboard afloat Maritime Prepositioning Force ships. At the same time in another area of the port, Marines offload vehicles from other ships.

More than 1,600 tracked and non-tracked Marine Corps vehicles and approximately 400 containers were either driven or lifted off of MPF.

GTEP personnel check tank capabilities

**VASIANI, Georgia** – The Vasiani Training Area was the stage for training as Georgian soldiers and Marine instructors test-fired nine T-72 main battle tanks and ten armored personnel carriers last week during the first mechanized live fire in Georgia since 1999.

Nearly 100 Georgian soldiers, under the instruction of seven Georgia Train and Equip Marine Corps tankers and amtrackers, lanyard fired the compliment of the Georgian Army's tanks and BMP's to safely test the recoil system and firing mechanisms.

“The Marine Corps lanyard fires all tanks that have no previous recorded firing history,” said Staff Sgt. Timothy Grier, an MIAI tank mechanic. The Georgians had no ver-

ifiable firing history for their mechanized assets.

The lanyard fire was conducted by attaching a rope to the manual firing mechanism inside the turret. The crew then stood behind the tank and yanked the rope to engage the trigger. After each 125mm tank main gun and 73mm BMP main gun was tested, the crews also tested the other weapon systems aboard each vehicle.

“This training was important because it verified that the tanks will be safe to train on during this cycle,” stated Grier. “This training was also the first time during the training phase that we had a chance to really work with the Georgian tankers and see what they could do,” he said.

The mechanized training Georgian soldiers received before Task Force GTEP arrived had been based on Russian doctrine. The Marines are teaching the Georgians the importance of combined arms warfare and the important role mechanized assets play.

Navy Secretary visits Peleliu at Pearl Harbor

**PEARL HARBOR NAVAL STATION, Honolulu** — U.S. Secretary of the Navy Gordon England visited Marines and sailors aboard the USS Peleliu Feb. 27, only a few hours after the ship pulled into port in Hawaii for its final liberty visit of WestPac 03-2.

England addressed a group of Marines and sailors inside the ship's cavernous hangar bay, saying that in his lifetime, the United States of America had faced three major challenges.

“I call them ‘the three isms’,” said England. “The first was fascism in World War II, and the second was Communism, which was a 40-year struggle for this country. The third is terrorism, and I believe this one is more serious.”

England said if the country had not prevailed in the first two, “this would be a different world today.” He also noted that the generation of Americans that fought World War II, commonly referred to as “The Greatest Generation,” were men and women who did their job defending America and didn't think of themselves as living in historic times.

“I think we're in historic times now, we just may not know it,” said England. “We will only succeed if our military succeeds, and you are our most valuable resource. It's not technology or infrastructure or materials, it's the outstanding men and women who wear the cloth of our country.”

Shortly before addressing the formation, Secretary England joined about 75 Marines and sailors for lunch on the PELELIU's mess decks.

Compiled by the MCRD Parris Island Public Affairs Office.

Building bombs ...



Cpl. G. Lane Miley  
**COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE HORN OF AFRICA — Special Agent Eric Morefield, bomb technician for the FBI, shows Marines and Djiboutian Police Academy students a model improvised explosive device during a class here Feb. 24. Infantrymen from K Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, whose daily duties are comprised of searching vehicles as they reach the entry control point aboard Camp Lemonier, say that the information received during the class will help them keep the base a little safer in the future.**